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INFO RHMFISS/CJTF HOA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 001951

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DEPARTMENT FOR IO/PSC M.GURCH AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2016

TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PREL](#) [ET](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UN EFFORTS TO
COMBAT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN UN PEACEKEEPING
MISSIONS

REF: SECSTATE 112531

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES VICKI HUDDLESTON. REASON: 1.4(D)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Neither host government, local media nor NGOs report any significant sexual misconduct or trafficking in persons (TIP) attributable to UN peacekeeping personnel in Ethiopia. However, both NGOs and UNMEE headquarters report several dozen children born out of wedlock who have allegedly been fathered by UN peacekeepers. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) In response to reftel, Embassy Addis Ababa made inquiries regarding the United Nations mission efforts to prevent TIP and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) activity among its peacekeeping forces in Ethiopia. United Nations forces in Ethiopia are primarily stationed on the Ethiopian and Eritrean border (Tigray region of Ethiopia), serving in the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). In making this assessment, post contacted the Ethiopian MFA, local UNMEE staff, NGOs working in the Tigray area and reviewed recent press regarding UN work in Ethiopia.

¶3. (SBU) The Ethiopian MFA reported not having received any information to suggest that either UNMEE employees or peacekeepers have been involved in TIP or SEA activities. Further, in the recent past, the local Ethiopian media has not published any such accusations. Locally engaged staff (LES) at post report that, in the capital Addis Ababa at least, there is no popular perception of such activity.

¶4. (C) In contacting NGOs operating in the northern Tigray region adjacent to the border with Eritrea where most of the UNMEE staff live and work, post received a contrasting perspective. Specifically, representatives of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) allege that some UNMEE personnel are engaged in illegal sexual activity with young women in Adigrat and other towns in Tigray. CRS reports that some UNMEE personnel ask sexual favors from young women for money.

While the relationship is allegedly consensual, parents of young women in the area are allegedly increasingly concerned by reports of such activity. Some women are said to have borne children fathered by UNMEE personnel, while none receive child support. CRS representatives explained that UNMEE personnel are stationed for a limited time and when they leave the country, the stigma attached to the fatherless children is significant in this traditional, conservative community. Post does not have statistics for the number of women involved in this issue, but CRS reports the number

could be as high as twenty, and that possibly many more go unreported. CRS indicated that there are no reports of TIP activity.

15. (C) Post discussed such allegations with UNMEE headquarters staff in Addis Ababa. UNMEE reported that in the past they have received some complaints of peacekeepers in the Tigray region fathering children with Ethiopian women and leaving Ethiopia with no financial compensation for the mothers. However, they indicated there have been no reports recently. UNMEE representatives also pointed out that increasing attention has been paid to this matter and that all incoming UN staff and peacekeepers receive lectures⁸ from UN management on proper behavior and etiquette while in Ethiopia. Further, a Conduct and Discipline team has been created by local UN management with the mandate to investigate any such claims and to bring any reports of such accusations to the attention of UN management. Aside from the few reported paternity cases, UN mission staff in Addis Ababa have not received any complaints regarding TIP or SEA activity in Ethiopia.

HUDDLESTON